

# L.I.F.E.\* STYLE

**\*Living  
In A  
Friendly  
Environmental Manner**

**A Waste Reduction Guide To Making Your Home Environmentally Friendly**



**BOONE COUNTY LANDFILL**

**A Tradition of Environmental Excellence Since 1970**

The Environment. We all want to do our part to protect it and make the world a better place to live. Many of us take the time to divert household items from the landfill by either participating in a community curbside recycling collection program or taking materials to an area drop-off recycling center. While these are commendable activities, there is much more that we can do everyday to ensure that we make the most of our natural resources and protect the environment.

The Boone County Landfill is the governmental agency responsible for implementing the area's comprehensive solid waste management plan. This plan has set goals for recycling and diverting of waste within the Landfill's planning area. Although these goals are ambitious, they are obtainable if we all work together and commit ourselves to changing our lifestyles a bit.

We need to pay closer attention to our lifestyles to make sure that we are living in as environmentally friendly a fashion as possible. The purpose of this guide is to provide you with some source reduction, reuse, and recycling ideas to make your home more environmentally friendly. To do this we will take a tour of your home and the neighborhood store.

We will start with your home first.

## **YOUR KITCHEN**

The kitchen is the most logical place to start since most of our garbage comes from that well-used room of the house. Many of the materials that we can reduce, reuse or recycle are used or generated in the kitchen. In fact, if you look at your kitchen waste carefully, you will notice that most of the materials are actually *packaging* wastes. Over-packaging results in more waste and higher disposal costs. It is important to pay attention to what you purchase to ensure that you buy products with a minimum of packaging waste.

The kitchen is good place to start reducing, reusing and recycling. In fact, if you do a good job reducing your kitchen waste, you will have already taken a big step towards making your home environmentally friendly. The following are some suggestions for you that will help you to reduce the amount of material you throw away:

## **YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD STORE**

We have offered some suggestions that you can use at home to reduce, reuse, and recycle your wastes. However, most of those suggestions apply only *after* you have purchased an item. Much of what you can do to reduce or recycle your waste occurs before, or during, your visits to the store.

By making the effort to keep your disposal options in mind when you purchase goods, you can truly make a difference. Listed below are some shopping and *precycling* tips:

- o **Buy Recycled!** Take the time to check and see if the product you are buying *contains any post-consumer recycled material*. By buying products using recycled materials you help to support recycling markets which improve the value of recyclable materials.
- o **Buy products that are *recyclable in your community!*** This will reduce what you have to put in your trash can at home. Be careful though. Just because an item states that it is recyclable does not necessarily mean that it is recyclable in your community's program.

- o **Avoid single-use disposable products!** Whenever possible, either purchase more durable goods or reuse products you may have at home.
- o **Buy in bulk! Avoid products with excess packaging!** Single serve packages use more packaging than larger bulk items. However, balance this with making sure that you buy only what you need, especially with perishable products.
- o **Support recycling!** Tell your store manager that you prefer buying products that are made with recycled content and/or are recyclable. Ask them to make every effort to seek out and stock these types of products. Store managers welcome this type of input from customers.

## YOUR BASEMENT AND GARAGE

Your basement and/or garage probably contain the most potentially hazardous wastes in your home. Paints, oils, pesticides, solvents and cleaners are generally referred to as "Household Hazardous Materials" (HHM). When used properly these materials pose little threat to the environment. It is when they are disposed or used improperly, that these materials can contaminate soil, water, and air. They can also pose a health hazard to humans and pets. It is very important that you make sure you use the product according to label instructions.

The following suggestions will assist you in minimizing the environmental impacts associated with HHM's:

- o **Don't buy too much!** Carefully estimate how much of a material you may need when making purchases. By buying only what you need you will eliminate having to dispose of excess material. Remember, just because a larger quantity is on sale for a price comparable to a smaller package, it is not a bargain if it creates a disposal problem for you.
- o **Give it away to others!** If you have excess materials, check with friends, family, and community organizations to see if they could use the material. This solves your disposal problem and saves others some money.
- o **Try alternatives!** There are many safe, more environmentally friendly alternatives that you can use in place of commercially-produced cleaning supplies. You would be surprised at how much baking soda can do! Contact the Boone County Landfill for more information on alternatives.

## YOUR YARD AND GARDEN

We all enjoy having a beautiful lawn (and garden). But how many of us enjoy the work involved with keeping a lawn looking beautiful? Or the expense associated with it? While there are not many alternatives to mowing the lawn or raking the leaves, there are some ways to keep the yard waste off your curb for collection and therefore lower your yard waste disposal bill.

- o **Don't bag grass clippings!** Mow your lawn more frequently, cutting just the top third of the grass blade. While this seems like more work, it actually saves time because you don't have to *bag* the grass. Studies have shown that leaving the shorter clippings

(which are rich in nutrients) on the lawn and mowing more frequently will result in a healthier, greener lawn with *less effort!* A mulching lawn mower is not necessary but it will help.

- o **Grow a healthy lawn!** Aerate and fertilize your lawn *in the fall*. This will promote strong plant growth and prepare the grass for healthy growth in the spring. Grass usually grows quite well by itself in the spring, so fertilizing during the growing season is not really necessary.
- o **Consider composting!** If you have a lot of grass clippings, leaves, and/or garden wastes, but do not want to put those materials out at the curb, consider starting a backyard compost pile. Composting will not only help you manage your waste on-site, resulting in disposal savings, it will also generate a soil product that you can use in your garden, flower beds, and around shrubbery and bushes. Compost is great for fighting weeds as well as soil erosion. (Note: before starting a compost pile, check with your local community to determine if it has any ordinances regulating backyard compost piles.)

## ADDITIONAL TIPS

The following are additional tips to consider in order to further reduce your household's waste:

- o **Reduce junk mail.** Write the Mail Preference Service of the Direct Marketing Association, P.O. Box 9008, Farmingdale, NY 11735-9008 to have your name removed from their mailing lists.
- o **Reuse cardboard boxes.**
- o **Avoid using disposable products.** This includes paper plates, cups, utensils, etc.
- o **Recycle your used motor oil and car batteries.**
- o **Give it away, don't throw it away!** Give away or donate items that you do not want anymore but are still usable.
- o **Reduce!** Be careful when purchasing items that you pay attention to the amount of packaging. Also, consider whether or not the product or its packaging is recyclable in your community.
- o **Reuse!** It sounds simple, but many of us overlook the obvious. Why throw something away when you can use it again and again. The kitchen is a treasure trove of reusable items such as aluminum foil, glass jars, and plastic containers.
- o **Recycle!** Don't be part of the problem! Be part of the solution! If you are not already recycling, think about starting. Recycling is easy. Many items such as newspaper, glass, metal cans, and plastics are being collected from homes just like yours. Contact the Agency or your local community to find out what recycling opportunities are available to you.

In many communities, following these suggestions can help you to significantly lower your waste disposal bill.

### **WANT TO LEARN MORE?**

Boone County Landfill staff are available to answer your questions and to conduct *free* group workshops and presentations on the following topics:

*On-Site Yard Waste Management*  
*Household Hazardous Wastes*  
*Commercial Recycling*

*Precycling*  
*Recycling*

For more information regarding any of the topics discussed in this guide, or solid waste management issues in general, please contact the:



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**Note:** Portions of this guide have been adapted from information developed by the following sources: West Cook County Solid Waste Agency; Des Moines Metro Area Solid Waste Agency; Illinois EPA and ENR; Missouri Household Hazardous Waste Project; and the City of Fort Worth, Texas.

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